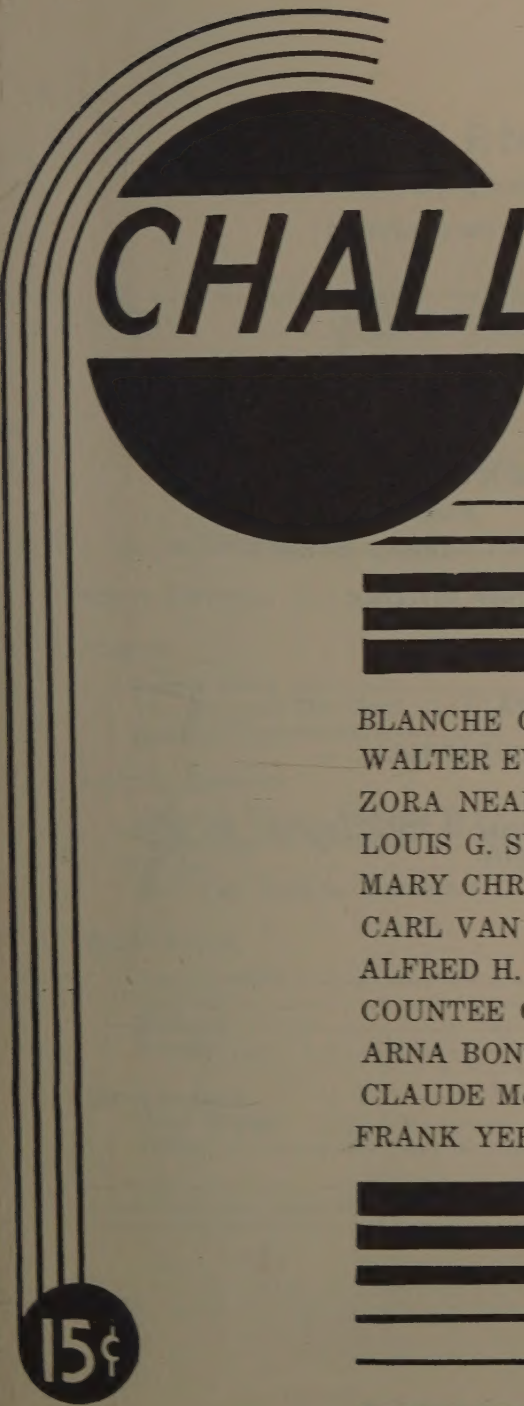
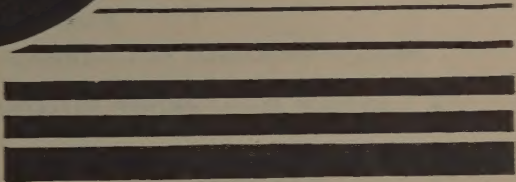


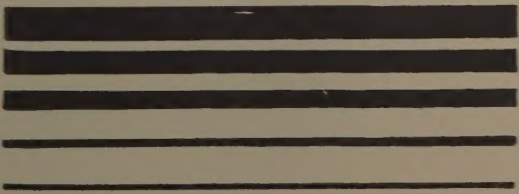


CHALLENGE

A LITERARY
QUARTERLY



BLANCHE COLTON WILLIAMS
WALTER EVERETT HAWKINS
ZORA NEALE HURSTON
LOUIS G. SUTHERLAND
MARY CHRISTOPHER
CARL VAN VECHTEN
ALFRED H. MENDES
COUNTEE CULLEN
ARNA BONTEMPS
CLAUDE McKAY
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FALL NUMBER

C H A L L E N G E

Wishes

Articles on CURRENT EVENTS

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POEMS

ESSAYS

DECORATIONS

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Guest Editorial

Dear Miss West, You requested an article
 From one whom la grippe has left a particle
 Only, of wit. Mid trumpets and sneezes
 And coughing and barking and phthisical wheezes,
 I, a mere wreck, invite you to sympathize!
 But, before you condole, I praise. You realize
 In CHALLENGE a dream you have made come true.
 In fancy, hat off, I congratulate you.
 Here are sketches from life and poems and stories;
 Not one I have read but has its own glories.
 Young writers whom years of leanness subdued,
 While they "worked for a living" and famine withstood,
 Followed the gleam of their stars and kept pace
 To drum and bugle of spirit. Hope of their race,
 Young Afro-Americans, down but not out,
 Are renescent — here answer the half-forming doubt,
 "Were those years of great promise a flash in the pan?"
 "Not so. Our names you may speedily count,
 But they will increase, and through lustra will mount
 To numbers that one day will add to the fame
 Of national letters and art, and reclaim
 What seeming we lost of beginning so fair.
 When earth older grows, and no more we compare
 But abide by the Absolute (Could we but see!)
 Who knows but we'll share fame's immortality!"
When one reads, dear Miss West, from great literature
 (If not the best of their kind, do authors endure?)
 One looks to the future for litr'y revival
 To match a few names, those sure of survival.
 One Chaucer, one Shakespeare, one Milton, one Keats,
 One Browning, one Swinburne — and who ever greets
 A Thackeray, Dickens, George Eliot, or Poe?
 Where are the lesser, the famed thus-and-so?
 Yet peaks were impossible but for the plain:
 Continuity see: let not up until death;
 Grasp the torch; pass it on; so long as you've breath
 Work! Yet, again, work! From your joy and your pain
 Of working for work's sake, your van leads the way
 To your coming of age, your great names, your day!

BLANCHE COLTON WILLIAMS

Juan's Cocoa

ALFRED H. MENDES

Juan lived up on the Caura heights, in the island of Trinidad. His little cocoa estate, containing no more than ten acres, was at least a mile from the road that wound down to the village of Tacarigua. To get to it you turned into Cabrera Trace and walked along until you came to the first shanty on the right. If it were evening, you would see Juan, brown-skinned and bearded, a huge sombrero on his head, squatting at his door with a clay-pipe in his mouth, resting from his labour in the cocoa. In crop-time he employed three or four coolie women, paying them thirty cents a day to pick, break, sweat, and dance the cocoa. He was a hard taskmaster with a bad temper, but the women, poor things, nearly all with husbands who beat them and gave them no money when on the spree, had to take anything that came their way; and Juan, for all his slave-driving, was better than no employer at all.

Here Juan had lived from the time he was twenty-five, and now he was fifty. He went into Tacarigua only when he had cocoa to sell, and never into town. Meeting friends in town meant drinking and getting drunk, so he preferred to sell his cocoa to On Sue, the Chinese shopkeeper in the village, take a shot of rum, and seated half-asleep on his donkey, allow the animal to amble up the mountain road until, in the gathering purple dusk, they arrived at the shanty—for the donkey knew the road as well as he did. Arrived, he would feed his donkey, tether him out under the large hog-plum tree for the night, boil himself a few dump-lings, and squat at his door ruminating old forgotten things. When the chill, settling down from the tree-tops, with

the birds' good-night songs, began to nip his aged bones he would lie on his wattle bed, cover himself over with the blanket he had had for many years, and slowly slide into sleep.

Rumours of the war had reached the village of Tacarigua. Juan listening on the rare occasions of his visits to On Sue's shop to the men discussing it, could not understand why they called it a cruel war, for had it not wrought the miracle of sending the price of cocoa soaring into the sky? Where before he had been accustomed to and satisfied with nine and ten dollars a fanega for his cocoa, now he was getting seventeen and eighteen; and although the war was over prices were still rising. So why a cruel war when it could give him visions of a new shanty? For the one he was now in was as old as the hills around and already tumbling about his head. And even after rebuilding he would still have a few hundred dollars left.

His savings he kept in a dented canister hidden away in the garret of his hut. Some nights, when he could not sleep after a too trying day's forking and hoeing, he would, by candlelight, count over and over again the crumpled smelly notes of his fortune. It never occurred to him that he would one day die and leave it all behind. Juan never thought of death. In his solitariness he had seldom heard of anyone dying. Death was below him, perhaps in the valley's villages and the large town of Port of Spain; up here, in the heights with the green of youth springing everywhere about him, was life only. His soil was rich, and never a cocoa-tree had he seen die. Though old, they were all

healthy, and crop-time saw their branches burdened with the brown and red and yellow fruit.

This evening, squatting before his door, he was looking at the two bulging bags which contained his four or five fanegas of cocoa. The donkey, already tethered for the night, was cropping the grass that seemed to have shot up since the morning, his tail leisurely swinging from flank to flank. On the morrow, at day-break, he would sling the two bags over the donkey's back and, walking beside the animal—the only living thing Juan never could slave-drive, they would move down the long, winding mountain road until they came into the village in the broiling heat of the high-riding sun.

He was trying to remember now what price his last lot—sold the year before, since when he had not visited the village—had fetched. Yes, eighteen dollars. He could remember how he had taken the figure for granted, for had not the previous six years seen a steadily rising market? Perhaps it was even higher now. Perhaps he would get twenty dollars, or even—but no, more than that would be too good to be true. Four fanegas—his worn-out brain was long in making the total eighty dollars. He puffed at his pipe. The blue smoke, in the windless, dusky air, hung above his head like a benediction from the dying day. Eighty dollars would be a fine addition to his little hoard. He could start on the rebuilding of his shanty without delay.

And so the high-riding sun on the morrow saw Juan with his beast of burden entering the village of Tacarigua. They halted before On Sue's shop and Juan entered.

"Mornin', On Sue," Juan said, bowing like an old grandee, his sun-baked face wrinkled. "Two bags, abou' five fanegas, an' gie me good weight, you hear?"

On Sue, with flapping slippers, walked to the front of the counter to greet Juan.

"You know plice?" he asked, blinking all the time.

Juan, in a good mood, thought he would tease the puny Chinaman.

"Oh," he said nonchalantly, "I suppose abou' twenty-fo dollars now," and he glanced at On Sue through the corner of his eye. His eyes were laughing.

"Twenty-fo' tollar!" On Sue said in a squeaky voice, making a deprecatory gesture with his sleeveless arms the while. "Up dere, in t'e heights, you no hear cocoa trop, trop righ' tong?"

The laughter went out of Juan's eyes.

"Wha' price?" he asked at length.

"Five tollar faneg'," On Sue said, turning and pattering round to the back of his counter.

It was a long time before Juan knew that On Sue was not joking; and, like a true Spaniard, when he did know he lost his temper completely.

Going out into the street he drove his donkey before him with harsh lashes on the flanks out of the village until he came to the bridge that spanned the river running down from the heights. There he stopped, and, unloading the donkey in a fine frenzy, he emptied the contents of the two bags into the hurrying waters beneath. Then he straddled himself astride the beast and rode back into the village with the empty bags. They at least, being new, were worth something, so he sold them to On Sue at a shilling apiece and bought a quart bottle of rum.

Evening found him sprawling across the gutter in front of On Sue's shop dead drunk.

The donkey, tethered to a post of the overhanging shed of the shop, gazed at the huge limp body of his master wistfully.

For a Leader

CLAUDE McKAY

You are a torchlight of humanity,
A flame of Justice burning bright, alone,
Over the miseries of mortality,
Where human hearts are dead and turned to stone.

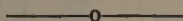
You are that uttermost crusading part,
The trumpet and the thunder and the storm,
A nerve pulsating of the eternal Heart,
That makes the miracle of the human form.

Let me be slave to all experience,
The beautiful, the utter and the strange,
For you the path of high magnificence
Climbing beyond the cloud-topped mountain range.

For you the incandescent fire of duty,
Your life consuming like a holocaust,
For me the world of passion, joy and beauty,
That makes me lover and iconoclast.

Oh take my songs and all the love they breathe
As symbols of my feelings incomplete,
Fashioned into a variegated wreath—
A poet's homage for your marching feet.

And as you go alone and single-willed,
Among them you may find a simple flower,
Whose perfume underneath your footsteps spilled,
May reach your senses in a lonely hour.



Saturday Night: Alabama Town

ARNA BONTEMPS

Day ends abruptly here. The Alabama twilight is as brief and lovely as a rainbow. A host of excited chimney-swifts leave the broken flues of a ruined old mansion, waver upward, fleck the sky for an instant, then disappear.

Suddenly we become aware of wagons, mule carts, on the red-dirt country road.

"Good-evening."

"H'm. Evenin', p'fessor. Evenin'."

It is hard to explain the title they have given me so confidently on first

sight. Maybe it is because I am dressed too well for a share farmer and too poorly for a rural doctor.

A few moments later we are in the procession, our light car leaping joyously on the sorry road. Town. The Saturday night rabble of a Southern farming community. The white-stone courthouse with its wide austere steps on four sides sits on a green knoll, surrounded by giant oaks. On the grassy slopes there are the usual can-

non mounted. Though the guns are hopelessly rusted, it is true that the Confederacy has never disarmed; the South is still in rebellion. A political stump speaker is standing on the impressive steps. He is seeking a petty office in the county and has drawn a crowd by his strident oratory.

"... Take Macon County fer'n instance. Down yonder there's seven niggers to every man, every white man. Why if anything was to happen. . . . Yet 'n still they got heap better roads 'n we got here in Madison County."

The streets have become crowded, but everyone seems to be idle, soberly gawking into shop windows to pass the time. We wander from shop to shop, buying apples and popcorn balls, and an old word turns in our thoughts. Medievalism. Medievalism. We know in our hearts that we have touched the nerve of this town's sore. Medieval serfs. Medieval lords. Medieval poverty. Medieval religion. Medieval thoughts. Medieval woes. There is no modern doubt here. This town takes its traditions without a quibble. Medieval credulity. And hence, in this black time, it has accepted defeat. The peasants gawk stupidly into shop windows.

Fortunately the earth is good. Green vegetables abound, overflow the bushel baskets on the cobblestones. Fortunately, too, a poor man can still brace his courage, make brave gestures. Old Badfoot Tyson is a case to remember. A solitary eccentric farmer, he made a decent crop of watermelon last summer. But Badfoot made the mistake of planting his melons too near the road. They were discovered by the boys of one of the colored schools. The boys made away with most of the crop, and the little game-legged man swore bitterly. One day a few weeks later when he was in the Negro barber shop getting a bottle of the particular hair

tonic that he had learned to drink, he heard that a crowd of students from the colored school had gone up the Pike on a truck for a day's outing. This information evidently remained in his thought even after he had emptied the bottle of "hair tonic," for he went home, got his double-barreled shot gun and started up the road. He found a jutting rock that hung over a high embankment and sat there to await the return of the students. Then when the truck did return, when it reached the turn where Badfoot was perched on the overhanging rock, he raised his gun, leveled and cut loose with both barrels. Half a dozen youngsters were swept from the flat bed of the truck. The old half-witted and drunken farmer cackled hoarsely and tumbled into the weeds below the embankment.

Our groceries bought, we drift over to the Negro street where our car is parked. The chauffeur of a local millionaire family, who closely resembles Paul Robeson, flashes his Packard into the block, stops before the pool hall and gets out leisurely. There is gawking but no despair in this block. It is true that Cynthe, the professional beggar, is a medievalism, but the depression has plainly hurt these folks but little. They have never had plenty; want is but a trifle sharper than before. On the other hand the boss men of the town have been softened. The business houses are kind.

We walk very slowly. In the Italian market there is a beautiful display of fresh red fish. In another place there is a pyramid of Florida oranges. The Negroes are all indolently shambling. A little troop of backwoods musicians has stopped at the lunch counter. We can hear their guitars, their voices.

Back that train an' git yo'

Heavy load, O Lawdy;

Back that train an' git yo'

Heavy load.

Suddenly a black boy hurries by with consternation on his face. He enters the colored drug store. Presently folks begin leaving the place. There is no indolence or shambling now. The Negroes walk rapidly. One, in his excitement, cuts across the street in the middle of the block. Another breaks into a run. All of them are getting off the main street, trying to make it to the darkened side streets. A crowd starts pouring out of the pool hall. Men slip along the fronts of the buildings like shadows. We hear a whip pop; wagon wheels commence to grind on the cobble stones.

What's up? What's it all about? Just a minute; tell me.

The best we get is a wild side glance. Terror is on the street. Out of the starry evening a warning has gone forth, something as tacit and ominous perhaps as the evidence that told Chicken Little that the sky was falling. The result (on a more heroic scale) is the same. Not an audible word is spoken on the sidewalks—just the mute communication of animal to animal, then terror and flight. And while they scurry feverishly, we stand beneath the yellow blossom of the swaying street lamp and gesture vainly with our hands. Still they pass. The disdain, the utter scorn, they have for us as outsiders is clearly manifest now. We are jostled roughly by a fat blubbery fellow whose breath we hear wheezing between his teeth, and when he turns to beg pardon, I take his arm firmly. The two of us plant our heels and shake our fingers in his face.

"You've got to tell us. We don't know what to do."

His eyes seem as round and flat as silver dollars. But he perceives our earnestness and submits to the inquisition.

"A white man has been kilt on the Pike jes outa town."

"Murdered?"

"Nah, run over. Somebody hit him wid a car."

We cannot hide the fact that the news is less stirring than we had expected, and we are more perplexed than ever.

"Well. What about it?"

"They don't know who kilt him. That's what. The car ain't stopped."

The town's motorcycle cop, a short barrel-chested fellow with baby cheeks, a cigar slanted across his face and a gun hanging from his belt, pops his motor, swings around the corner where we are standing and dashes out toward the Pike. A moment later an automobile careens dangerously on the same turn. There are two young men hanging on the running board. We restrain our prisoner with difficulty.

"Well. . . ."

"It might o' been a cullud man what did that killin'."

"Oh."

The light breaks. We know right well that it was a colored man who was driving that car. The others know it instinctively. We had to be told enough to put our minds on the right track. That driver refused to stop because he feared a mob.

The suave nut-brown pharmacist is standing in the door of his place with hands thrust nervously into the pockets of his freshly laundered white coat. We go inside, order sodas and sit down with him at one of the little round tables. All of us try hard to show ourselves unshaken by the panic on the streets. The druggist tells us that he studied at the Meharry Medical School in Nashville. We are glad to know him.

We can hear the sharp deliberate ticks of a small clock on a shelf. Presently the streets are empty.

* * *

Saturday night again—and again things to buy. The clerk in the chain store offers to bring our box of gro-

ceries out to the curb. **Hurry back!** We need meat, perhaps veal. . . . A few years ago in certain small towns of the South colored folks could not buy veal. The limited supply was frankly reserved for white customers. That seems far away; here we even have the effrontery to be exceedingly critical of that which is offered us.

On again; more shops, more purchases. The short bald man in the Jewish variety store stands against the glass door with hands in his pockets. He wears a dark sweater coat. Two or three Jews in this town are unpleasant to Negroes. The blacks hold no malice, however. They feel that they understand. Even the illiterate blacks imagine they comprehend the psychological subtleties of race prejudice. They are amused by its vagaries. And in this one matter, we actually believe, the gods have in fun blessed them with an Olympian viewpoint.

But we have not forgotten the breathless pandemonium that filled these streets on the night of our last visit to town. Apparently the incident is forgotten. The huge good-looking chauffeur is standing beside his glistening Packard, a cigar held elegantly between his long fingers. Cynthe is on the street again, a snuff brush hanging from her lips, her hand cupped in an attitude of medieval humility as she asks for a coin. The motor cop, cruising the streets leisurely, wears a big smile. Somehow we can't accept this tranquility. It is not natural that a night so charged with peril and drama should pass so lightly. Perhaps we need to adjust ourselves. There is a peculiar nervous preparation that we do not have, a certain diffidence. These black folks live on the very edges of a crater, and the grave danger that stops our breath merely to observe has ceased to terrify them. And we can see now that the excitement that drove them

from the streets a week ago was no more important than a sudden rain. They are neither tired nor depressed after that vigorous drain on their emotions.

The barber shop is crowded. The air is heavy with smoke and with rustic political comment. Still we are unable to get an answer when we ask about the accident on the road. The decision of the Supreme Court in favor of a new trial for the Scottsboro boys still creates a lively stir, however. The black middle-aged barber, who seems to have a genius for catching the consensus of opinion, makes a whispered summary when the others have become quiet.

"The Alabama co't is gonna kill them boys for meanness now. You can bet yo' bottom dollar on that. Either they is gonna kill 'em or they's gonna give 'em life—an' that's worsen."

At a soda fountain we meet the rosy buff-colored mulatto girl who operates the elevator in a local department store. What about that accident on the road last week? There is nothing to hide now. She looks up from her glass with the stain of dark grapes on her teeth.

"Sure they got him. You see, there was two other folks in the car with him: all colored. He was just seventeen. He was giving the other two a ride. They turned him up to the sheriff. He would of stopped, he said, but he was afraid of a mob. That's good sense. They had his trial yesterday. Ten years. Better'n being lynched, I say."

She is in a hurry. There is going to be a dance. Of course, we can't detain her; anyway we would be misunderstood if we persisted in buying her sodas. There are only straight lines in the reasoning of these folks. There is a limit to the number of sodas you may

buy a yellow girl on Saturday night. We are too fatigued and depressed to care much.

Upstairs the colored doctors and dentists have offices on the same floor with the black fortune teller who calls himself "Kid Wonder." The latter is away—he has also an office in Birmingham—but the doctors, dentists and lawyers can be seen through their glass doors. All of them smoke cigars and recline majestically behind their desks. One doctor has an ironing board for an examination table; the wicker bottoms are broken out of the chairs. He has large fan-like hands that he holds before his face as he talks, and we notice that the fingernails wear vivid black rims. A black peasant in overalls and jumper is listening to his words, following his gestures with round-eyed wonder.

We had intended to have a word with the doctor, but we decide not to wait. On the street again. We are forced to admit that the caricatures of Mr. Octavius Roy Cohen are less absurd than we had formerly credited them with being. It is interesting that the medicine men and the fortune tellers should have offices on the same floor of the same building, that here these two professions should be inclined to flow together as they did in the middle ages. Let us walk awhile; there is no hurry.

A quick wind blows up a few clouds. There is a brief flurry of rain, then again the small white moon: let us walk awhile. The pool hall is filled with voices, laughter. The barber puts his head out of the door and tells us a picturesque bit of gossip about the rosy buff-colored girl and a certain prominent rich man. He smiles: well what do you make of it? We do not answer because that is the same question we have been asking ourselves all

evening. Again the moon slips into a pocket of clouds.

It is raining when we get on the Pike, the windy gusts coming first from one side and then the other. What do you make of it? Certainly there is beauty here, quality: the undismayed peasantry, the fruitful land, the many-colored rain, the melancholy of old moss-covered buildings and moss-covered traditions, the crushed and broken soldiers who have never surrendered, much beauty. But it is all wrong. The beauty of this town is solely the beauty of its sins, its feudal injustices, its peaceful paupers, its colorful hangovers. Cynthe with her bowed head and cupped hand, the giant chauffeur taking pride in his authority as a favored menial, the yellow girl with her purple stained teeth and her flowing ribbons of gossip, the meretricious medicine men, the clean young druggist with his hopeless eyes, the silver-haired rural editor, the strident-voiced stump speaker, the bitter Jewish shopkeepers.

The rain increases. At the turn of the Pike there is an automobile stuck in the heavy mud. We slow down. The white driver beckons to two blacks who are about to pass him without stopping. "Come here, boys, give me a push." They do not speak but come quietly and set their muscles against the weight of the car. Presently it gets away. The driver does not pause or look back. No matter. They would not see his gesture anyway. Their caps are pulled over their faces, their heads bowed against the driving rain. Apparently neither they nor the driver have been aware of anything irregular in the episode that summoned them to push a carload of able men out of the mud and left them ankle deep in the spot as the others drove away. Apparently there is no pang, no tragedy.

The Fire and the Cloud

ZORA NEALE HURSTON

Moses sat upon his new-made grave on Mount Nebo. His back stooped wearily, but his strong gaze leaped the Jordan and travelled over the land of Canaan.

A lizard popped out of a hole under a rock directly before Moses.

"Good morning, O brother-of-insufficient walking legs. I find you at waking where I left you at sun-rest." So the reptile greeted Moses.

With his eyes still in Canaan, Moses answered. "Ah yes, little kin who-uses-all-his-legs-for-walking, the labor has been long. This is the thirtieth day that I have sojourned upon this mountain." He waved at the mound of stone. "Behold, friend, it is finished."

From the top of a low bush near the left foot of Moses the lizard studied the work. "It is good. But you have been a long time in the building of your nest. Your female must be near death from retaining her eggs."

"No fecund female awaits this labor."

"A male alone?"

"A male alone."

"Perhaps you are a widower also. It is very sad, but you must know that fat lizards have many sudden-striking enemies." A tear dewed the leaf beneath him.

"I am alone, O lizard, because I am alone."

The lizard felt that Moses' answer lacked reason and he would have taught him how to make answer as do the great ones in the council of lizards, but when he lifted his head to speak, he beheld the head of Moses enveloped in a dense white cloud. "The gods have borne away the head of the rock-lifter," he thought aloud, and scurried to his

hole in quivering awe. He slept and memory fled away. So soon he emerged and looked into the benign eyes of the nation-maker from the same bush.

"The lizard says that the present hour is much hotter than the tender ones of morning," he began abruptly.

"The lizard is wise," Moses answered casually.

"The words of lizards are full of truth," the reptile went on cunningly. "But even so, O friend-who-digs-his-hole-above-ground, the greatest among us has no rod that can summon fly-swarms at will." The lizard said this and looked at Moses under-eyed.

"That is true," Moses agreed with his thoughts at a distance.

"All your works accumulate praise. Twenty and nine days you have been with me upon this mountain, and each day you have called forth a swarm of flies at the hour when I am most hungry."

"Pardon me, friend," Moses said humbly. "The thirtieth day shall be as the twenty-nine." He lifted his rod ever so slightly and flies swarmed over the bush upon which the lizard rested. "Sup."

The lizard ate. The last fly of the swarm was just enough. Every day it had been so. He looked at Moses in admiration.

"Whence do you come, O Master?"

Moses pointed to the plain of Moab where the tents of Israel crowded the horizon.

"How do you say that you are alone if of your kind such hosts of multitudes be at hand?"

"I am that I am and so I am alone. I am Moses, The-drawn-out. It is giv-

en me to call God by his power-compelling names. I bear his rod. The blind and the mute have companionship, but I am a leader."

"I see that your leadership has galled your shoulders. Why then did you go before?"

"I went because I was sent. In my agony I cried into nothingness and enquired 'Why am I called?' There was no answer. Only the voice that again said 'Go!'"

"How long O mighty Moses, have you led?"

"Forty years and more. From the mountain of God I returned to Egypt, and with my stretched-out arm I confounded the Pharaoh, and led my people forth with a mighty hand. From the Nile, where we were bondsmen, to beyond the Jordan, where they shall rule."

"Ah Moses, because you have so exalted your kind and kindred, their love for you must exceed this great mountain in thickness and the height would not be less."

"Lizard, love is not created by service to mankind. But if the good be deemed sufficiently great, man sometimes erects little mountains of stone to the doer called monuments. They do this so that in the enjoyment of the benefit they forget not the benefactor. The heart of man is an ever empty abyss into which the whole world shall fall and be swallowed up."

"Do none of the hosts love their deliverer?"

"Who shall know? However, Joshua is strong in soul and body. He shall follow me. He gives thought to me. If I do not return to my tent before another day begins, he will ascend this mountain in search of me."

"Your labors have brought little joy."

"Lizard, forty years ago I led a

horde of slaves out of Egyptian bondage and held them in the wilderness until I grew men. Look now upon the plain of Moab. A great people! They shall rule over nations and dwell in cities they have not builded. Yet they have rebelled against me ever. A stiff-necked race of people. They murmur against me anew because I have held them before the Jordan for forty days. Their taste would humble them before the armies of Canaan. They must wait yet another thirty days. I have not striven with God, with the wilderness, with rebellion and my own soul for forty years to bring them to a new bondage in the land beyond the Jordan. They shall wait for strength."

"How then, Moses will you hold your horde of murmurers on the brink of the Jordan when their eyes already feast on the good land?"

"If a leader dies in Israel, the hosts mourn thirty days."

Again the head of Moses disappeared in cloud and a sleep fell upon the lizard. But the cloud-splitting eye of Moses carried to the silver gilt hills of Canaan lying half in the late light, and half in shadows of the setting sun, and his soul wandered beyond the Jordan for the space of half an hour. When it returned to him upon Nebo he gazed down upon the tented nation beneath him, and the nation-maker sorrowing, wept over Israel. But Israel, unknowing, sang and danced, hammered its swords, milked its cows, got born and died.

"Ah Moses," the lizard observed on waking. "You shall yet rejoice. Soon your hosts will triumph beyond the Jordan, and you shall be called king of kings."

"I have already known the palaces of the Pharaohs, lizard, but I was not happy in the midst of them."

"You were an alien in the Egyptian

palaces, but the mansions in Canaan shall be of your kindred."

"When the Israelites shall erect palaces, God shall raise up abundant palace-dwellers to fill them. I have taught them statutes and judgments fit for the guidance of kings and shepherds alike."

"But will they remember your laws?"

"If I tarry within this that I have erected on Nebo, then shall they remember my laws in Canaan. People value monuments above men, and signs above works."

The lizard travelled around the tomb and studied its contours.

"But Moses, your splendid new dwelling has no hole by which you may enter. A queer dwelling. A hole above ground—no entrance."

"This is no dwelling, lizard. It is a place of burial."

"I am no longer young, Moses, perhaps, I nodded. What buried you there?"

"No, you did not witness it, but

here is interred the voice of Sinai, the stretched-out arm of Moses, the law-giver, the nation-maker."

"Those are your words, but I behold you sitting as you sat at sunrise."

"Those are your thoughts, but you see the old man of the wilderness sitting upon the tomb of Moses."

Whereupon Moses arose and took one long look at the tented nation in the valley, and his face shone as it had done at Sinai when even Aaron had feared to look upon it. He took one dragging look beyond the Jordan, then wrapped his mantle closely about him.

"Sun is set," he said in low rumbles.

"I depart."

He laid his rod upon the new-made tomb, set his face sternly towards the wilderness and walked away, leaning lightly on a new-cut staff.

"But wait, O Moses!" the lizard squeaked after him, "You have left your rod behind."

"Oh, Joshua will pick it up," he called back and strode on.



Magnets

The straight, the swift, the debonair,
Are targets on the thoroughfare
For every kind appraising eye;
Sweet words are said as they pass by.
But such a strange contrary thing
My heart is, it will never cling
To any bright, unblemished thing.
Such have their own security
And little need to lean on me.
The limb that falters in its course,
And cries, "Not yet," to waning force;
The orb that may not brave the sun,
The bitter mouth (its kissing done),
The loving heart that must deny
The very love it travels by,
What most has need to bend and pray,
These magnets draw my heart their way.

COUNTEE CULLEN

Debunking the Spirituals

WALTER EVERETTE HAWKINS

Much of the claptrap passing for "Art" is not Art at all, but rather a desecration of Art. It is mostly a hodge-podge of nonsense picked out of the refuse, bound together by a sinister hemp rope disguised as a chord of human benevolence, painted with sufficient veneer to attract the unsuspecting, then passed along by the other fellow as "Your contribution to Art." This applies forcibly to those vulgar, moronic imbecilities mislabeled "Negro Spirituals."

These songs are not the product of the Negro race any more than crap-shooting is a characteristic Negro Art. The fact that Negroes have at times hummed snatches of these so-called songs, and that some Negroes today are paid to sing them to help the white man in his program to portray the Negro as a meek and humble, spineless nobody, does not make them Negro products.

I spent 25 years in the South mingling with all conditions and kinds of Negroes; I have visited Southern jails and prison camps; have attended all kinds of Negro churches, camp meetings, baptisms, and revivals, and I never heard one of these songs till I met students from Hampton Institute, the school which collected these songs for the students to sing in their devotionals. The songs gained popularity when the school sent out quartettes to sing before white audiences so as to tickle them into giving money for Negro education in the South.

In the March CHALLENGE, Mr. Harry T. Burleigh gushes out loud over the "sacredness" of these silly atrocities. Where does Mr. Burleigh get that stuff? He cannot possibly be speaking for the New Voice, but rather the Hat-in-hand Uncle Toms who we

thought had passed out of the picture.

If these songs possessed any cultural attainment, worthwhile ethical concept, and any sense, the white race would have claimed them long ago. They afford the white man something to laugh at (And how the whites do love to see Negroes cut the fool!), give them something by which to compare themselves; they inflate the white man's ego and make him feel "superior." They serve as a means to keep the Negro meek and lowly,—“moaning low”—in the valley of helplessness and despair; and so long as the race can be kept reconciled to “his place” on his knees, expecting the white man's gods to drop him a hunk of pie out of the trees, it will be easy for the capitalistic robbers to creep up behind him and steal his goods. Herein lies the most vicious clutch of capitalistic exploitation—the appeal to his emotionalism with empty promises of cloud mansions in the land of Nowhere as recompense for being thoroughly fleeced and skinned here.

Mr. Burleigh's eulogy of these songs, is as unfortunate, untimely and out of order as the late Gov. Rolph's eulogy of lynching. Shall we stultify ourselves by accepting as our contribution to American culture this silly trash which a nitwit recently broadcast to the world as “nigger” spirituals? Where is our self-respect? If we accept them, why not go the whole hog and accept the entire program of Negro inferiority, of which these songs are the most sinister part, which has now become the definite propaganda of pulpit, press, stage and radio?

While all other races are building up charming symphonic highways of Grand

Operas, the Negro is still down on his knees in the gutter moaning such silly rot as "Ezekiel Saw A Wheel", and "Nobody Knows de Troubl' I See." The race's destiny is made to depend upon whether or not Ezekiel saw a wheel after eating a mess of flap-jacks made of barley meal and the unmentionable diet fully described in Ezekiel 4, which Jehovah offered his holy prophet as a substitute for butter.

Art should express Man's culture and not degradation; his winging flight to the heights of freedom, not his tame submission to slavery; his determination to crown a Goddess of Reason, and not elevate blind superstition on a throne. What has the Negro to "glory hallelujah" about? Only fools glory in their own slavery, persecution and oppression.

Russian Correspondence

A FRAGMENT BY MARY CHRISTOPHER

September 23

Darling,

It is morning, and the maid has been in, that dear dear woman who hurried in after you went away, and patted my head, and kissed my cheek, and tried so hard to console me. As if anyone could console me for your going!

It was the brave boots that made me cry, and the red shirt. You are never so dear to me as when you are wearing them. And somehow it frightened me. The last look is always so unforgettable. One says, I did not know when we said good-by, that we would never meet again.

You know, I always thought I would not take this trip. Is this the end for us? I always think of it as the end. We will never take up our life again where we left off. I may never even see you after Moscow. Yes, come to me in Paris with your hair very shaggy and your boots very worn. I shall be faithful to the memory of all this for very long.

I am nearly new this morning. My neck is peeling, from being all burned up by the fever, Peg says. I don't feel so tired and sleepy, and my eyes are more wide-open. Darling, I mean to be so entirely well the rest of the so short time we are together. I want you to remember me sturdy and smiling.

Peg says you went away in style in the International train, with a shiny samovar in your compartment and a nice big berth to toss in. And all she said about Nadya was that you seemed a little put out when she joined you, and I feel no jealousy whatever, I only want you to laugh a lot and ride a camel in your brave boots.

Beta

September 24

Darling,

My temperature was normal last night. But this morning I waked and coughed a tiresome lot, and I thought sadly, Won't it be funny if consumption is a complication, and when Tack comes back, I shall be way off to some mountain, and maybe I will die there, and Tack will never see me alive again.

I am sitting up today in Peg's warm room with a blanket wrapped around my legs. Sometimes the sun shines and everything puts on a bright face. Even my eyes are less weary, and my neck is peeling better this morning, thank you.

I've had no thought that has not centered on you for the past several hours. I don't want you terribly. I couldn't. You must be having such a grand time. Be a wild boy. Braise yourself, but don't break any bones. Laugh. Be as noisy as you like. Go to bed very tired. Have a last thought of me. My first and last and in-betweens are of you.

I see you in Odessa, and on the Black Sea and in Berlin, and on the Baltic. And sitting in the window in our first room in Moscow in your brave boots and the red shirt at the end of a day in which we had loved each other very much.

I love you just as much today.

Beta

September 25

Darling,

It is half-past three and a dark day. It has been a fairly amusing day though. Peg has been at her temperamental best. But her poor little interpreter has flushed and paled, and been treated thoroughly vile.

I feel fine. I'm dressed and warmly wrapped. No temperature at all. Only the coughing spells in the mornings. Not serious.

Tack, it's so much better that I'm leaving Russia. Really. You see, I can have a career almost anywhere. But Russia is your salvation. Grow and expand here. Live without women for two years. Live selfishly and succeed.

I am bitter today. I love you, and I don't want to leave you, but even you could not persuade me to stay. And Nadya, how she will inveigle herself into your very soul during this trip. She knows I am not staying. And the little French girl, well, have her too. And that silly Tania. All your bright birds. Nadya is not my friend. Some day you will see.

Beta

September 26

Darling,

I am very tired tonight. I went out today for the first time to the clothing store with Peg, and we stayed about an hour, and

then went to the Grand Hotel for a really good dinner. I came home at six very weary, and I have continued weary, but it was good to breathe outdoor air, and see life moving, and be in the push again.

You reach Turkestan today. Are you a wild boy? Be a wild boy, my dear. Race to the blood-red sun. I love you. I miss you. I want you. I'm lonely. The room is so still.

Peg called me a little bird last night! Another bird!

I sent a sad letter to Tartakov yesterday. Why didn't Nadya tell him about my meeting you in Baku? Tack, she wants to separate us. I swear it, I swear it. Why can't you see what is so plain to see?

Sleep like a log tonight, my darling.

Beta

September 27

Darling,

I feel so sick today. Everything is sort of blurry, and my head feels light and queer. I am covered up with your blanket. I undid it today. It is warm and prickly, and I have burrowed under it like a bear. Yes, I am a bear not a bird. A brown bear not very grown with a serious disposition.

I wish I could picture you and the others in Turkestan. How did you spend today? Do you have enough to eat, darling? Is it proper food? Try to get something hot each day.

I wish these letters could reach you. But I'll write them faithfully, and bring you the lot to Baku. They are a journal of my days.

I am so tired. I feel so hot. Give me a little water from the faucet, please. No, darling, I am only teasing. I shan't be a fool.

I love you,

Beta

September 28

Darling:

My temperature is 38.6! Suppose I can't meet you in Baku? My heart will break.

Don't reproach yourself for leaving me here. It was best. I've been a weak wretch I would simply have languished and died on the train. I would have been a bother to you, and I want you to be a wild boy.

Beta

September 29

Darling,

The doctor has been here, thumping me all over, and making me breathe deep, and bending my legs and arms, and looking down my throat, and listening to my heart, and telling me to take raspberry jam with tea to make me perspire!

Well, my temperature is only 37.5 this afternoon, so I am al-

most good again, but he wants me, rather orders me, to stay in bed two days, and then indoors four days more. Oh, honey, I feel such a spoil sport.

Beta

September 30

Darling,

My right arm is such a useless wretch. It has to be coaxed and coddled by the left hand before it does any work. There, says the left hand, if I put you in position, will you write to Tack? And after much grunting and wheezing, the right arm will.

But I'm much better. I go to bed beautifully early, between ten and eleven, and I come awake at seven or so, feeling like a daisy.

Tack, when you stand at the train window, and Nadya stands beside you, talking about things proletarian in a voice that is probably earnest and rapt, don't, dear love, miss the field and the flowers, and the birds' flight, and the tall trees, and the tumbling peasant children.

Those things are eternal. From Nadya you can only make a contemporary novel. She is present day Russia, as you say. But what is there in her face that you can put on canvas? Here is a woman who loved much? Here is a woman who suffered much? Don't be a proletarian. Be a painter.

The sun is shining like mad. I love you.

Beta.

October 1

Darling,

Almost no aches and pains today. And now I am counting the days until your telegram comes. But Peg spoke to Tartakov about me, and he said he had nothing to do with my going to Baku.

Can't I come on my own? Write me all particulars as to how to reach you. Meet me in the brave boots and don't bring Nadya.

Beta

October 2

Darling,

I went out today and had an excellent dinner at the Metropole. Peg and I sat at the table you and I have so often sat at. The orchestra played, and my thoughts flew to Asia. And oh, my dear, don't catch any germ, be careful of the water, and ride a camel in your brave boots.

No temperature today and such a small ache. I can almost turn handsprings. I will when your telegram comes. Send it soon. I almost can't wait. I want to come south where the hot sun is shining. The sun doesn't love me, but I love the sun.

Each day I want more and more to stay in Russia. For one

thing I can't bear the thought of packing, seeing Tartakov, getting visas, getting tickets, getting frantic, wasting time and energy, and going quite mad. And then darling, leaving you to a lonely Christmas. There's Nadya, but she, being such an earnest proletarian, would hardly have a tree with a star at the top.

And you and I would have had a tree. A little tree, and I would have got some trimmings somewhere. And what fun to shop for presents for each other, as poor as we'd be, as poor and as happy.

No darling, that's a dream. Everyone thinks this is best for us both, our parting. And yet I am sometimes frightened for you. Without me you will be such a wild wild boy. For you are a wild one inside yourself, and you always will be. Occasionally some woman comes along and for a period stabilizes you. And when she is gone you sigh with relief, and are yourself again.

Bless you my darling, you mean to remember me and cherish that memory. But I give you a month to forget I am on earth. But study. Let painting be more important to you. Let it be the center of your world, or turn to something else entirely. Your work should be your first love, your greatest passion.

Maybe you think the arts are not enough. They embrace all life. If you are a true artist, poetry and prose and painting are simply word substitutes for people. You continually thirst for knowledge of your neighbor. And when you know your neighbor and yourself, you can splash your colors like God.

Beta

October 3

Darling,

A dark day and I did so want to go out. But the clouds are hanging very low. Now there's one patch of blue. Cloud, don't swallow it up! Let it expand. It is very necessary that I go out and strengthen these comic legs that just refuse to function whenever they choose.

Darling, the first snow! Thick flakes falling, and the whole world very white and cold.

Am I going to join you? I'm losing hope. I miss you. Where are you today? I love you.

Beta

October 4

Darling,

It is bitter cold today. It rained, and then the sun came out, and I flew outdoors. And suddenly it was raining again, but not hard, so I went on doggedly.

I went to see Charles for you. He still has found no place. The lady doctor doesn't want to be crowded. Everywhere else it's the same thing, no space.

Dear sweet, somehow I know I shall not join you. I've got

apathetic about it. It is twelve days since you left, and still no telegram. The journey is almost half over.

Everyday I lie here in nervous expectancy. I look in the mailbox. I wait for a call. It's no good. I must get it out of my mind. But why did fate do this to me? I am so strong. Why was I sick? Is the long brightness over? Has the blackness begun?

Beta

October 5

Darling,

There are a dozen little wild boys around the fire yonder. I see them from my window. There is a big vat where the men are mixing something to fix the street. The wild boys sit around this fire and laugh and sing. Most of them are barefoot. Their faces are quite black from the soot. Thru their ragged trousers you see white flesh. The contrast is startling. I never see them eating. I never see them go outside that warmth. One little boy can't be more than nine.

One wants to do something, and what can one do? They look happy. They are playing now. My God, look at that ragged one!

It is a dark day. I want the sun to shine and strengthen my bones.

I love you.

Beta

October 6

Darling,

Your telegram came yesterday at noon. I tore up to Tartakov, and he hemmed and hawed, and my heart went down in my boots. But I used my charm and all my Russian, with English asides of exasperation, and finally he said yes.

I'm leaving tomorrow at half-past twelve. What a lark it'll be alone. But I'm going in fear and trembling. Suppose you have left Baku! I couldn't come the fifth as you told me to. Russian red tape.

Don't leave me darling. Wait. I won't be long coming. Yes, it will be ages. The hours will crawl.

The little wild boys are asleep around the vat, lying quite flat on the cold ground. The oldest is no more than fourteen, and the youngest is no higher than my heart. And it is almost a December day.

Beta

October 7

On the train

Darling,

I'm off! Here we go. The houses slip by and the city trees. Day after tomorrow I'll see green fields again. I want the warmth

of the sun. My very bones yearn.

There are four of us in this compartment. Two men, one very beautiful, and one rather sick. And a nice little lame lady who speaks some French and a little English. What a piece of luck! And she goes beyond Baku. So I shall have an interpreter all the way.

Darling, life will be a lark again. I'm glad about everything except leaving Peg. She's been a lamb to me.

Honey, look at the cabbages!

Beta

October 8

Darling,

It is morning and a bright clear day. There were icicles on the window last night, but the train is warm as toast. None of these people are too talkative. It's really very cosy in here.

This isn't an International train by a long shot. There's no restaurant, and at each station the passengers hop off and dash into the waiting-room for hot water for tea.

This dear sweet soul is kindness itself to me. She has lent me a cup, she gives me tea, and wants to share everything in her enormous basket. And she is as clean and neat as a pin. She is forever brushing up and straightening up this compartment. Life passes pleasantly, and the days and nights are not too unbearably long.

No dust, no dirt. I still feel clean. Darling, the sky is so blue. The lowland is spotted with cows. I love cows. I love their solidity and their placidity. Some day I will buy me a purple one.

Beta

October 9

Darling,

I don't want it to rain. I want it to be a shining day tomorrow.

I want to come hatless and coatless and smiling, and not stay indoors, but go wild all over Baku.

We have passed some beautiful country. The sun shone then. Now the sky is the color of smoke, and the mist almost veils the mountains.

This blessed soul gave me my breakfast. I'm quite without food now. Oh, honey, I wish you were here. When we're not mad with each other, we can be such fun together.

This young communist is as worried about this journal as he can be. He peers and peers, but the words mean nothing to him.

Don't try to meet me so early in the morning.

I love you!

Beta

Cudjoe, Unsung King of the Maroons

LOUIS G. SUTHERLAND

Upon the gray dawn of an August morning, as the morning stars flickered out their fading beams across the broad, expanseless heavens, two Maroon Negroes with tightly drawn nerves ambled somberly out of a mountain hovel into the crispness of the morning air and with upraised conches to their trembling lips, shattered the death-like silence that had spread itself like a canopy over the purple mantle of a Jamaica mountain.

Within a few moments, lively human forms were moving hurriedly up and down the mountainside as if, by some magic enchantment, their slumbering little mountain village had suddenly sprung to life. Some of these were grave and silent, some chatted excitedly while others, wailing, gestured frantically with their hands as if entreating the malicious gods of the jungle.

Only once before in all their two hundred years of turbulent history were these runaway Negroes so completely overwhelmed by the invasion of death into their mountain retreat. That had been many, many years before when late one night as the moon flooded the jungle with its unhealthy light, the bony, emaciated remains of Nanny, their queen, prophetess, sorceress, and indefatigable fighter was carried away with becoming Koromantisi rites to its final resting place in a dark and silent gorge between the valley of two ponderous mountains. However, that was during their war with the whites which prevented the unrestrained lamentation possible now that they were free.

So this August morning there were no obstacles to interrupt them as they paid their last, fervent tribute to King Cudjoe, the man who had won them

their independence, and who for more than a quarter of a century had guided their destiny and ruled capaciously among these runaway slaves who had long ago established themselves in the strongholds of these treacherous mountains.

From these very mountain fastnesses some twenty years before, Cudjoe had defied the British Crown, defeated every troop sent out against him, led the main body of his men in battle while keeping in constant touch with every move that was made in Jamaica for his capture or his suppression.

Nearly a hundred years before Henry Christopher waged his relentless struggle to avenge the slaves of Haiti, Cudjoe had carried on a vigorous campaign to oust the white settlers in Jamaica, and to restore to all the slaves the liberty of which they were deprived through the voluptuous institution of slavery. His was not of the same magnitude as the Haitian Revolution involving hundreds and thousands of men. Cudjoe's "army" never at any time exceeded five hundred fighting men, but with these, trained in the craft of bush fighting, he staged a resistance which, although confined to the hills and mountains, was as full of violence and as pregnant with dramatic episodes as those which characterized the more sophisticated and bloody Haitian Revolution.

Cudjoe's metamorphosis rise to power began on a certain portentous day late in the month of October of 1715—the very year that King Louis XIV of France died. It was a hazy, murky afternoon. It had rained torrents all that morning. Then suddenly the sun thrust its molten rim above the cavernous clouds and remained motionless

in the sky; the leaves and boughs were still dripping from the heavy rains, and the ground, soft and pliable from the heavy blanket of wet, decaying leaves, betrayed deceitfully the movement of the rebels who had stealthily appeared for a battle.

A unit of the Ninth Dragoon, drenched to the skin, was drifting disconsolately back to their camping base when what was least expected — at least at that moment—occurred. A band of Maroon brigands that had been lurking in ambush near a narrow defile through which the soldiers were passing, opened fire upon them. The soldiers, although confused and bewildered by this sudden and unexpected attack, quickly returned a volley of shots in the direction of their invisible assailants, one of which—the only one—uncannily found its target in the temple of a Maroon rebel, killing him instantly. This unfortunate Maroon was the father of a young man, himself attached to this band, who was simply known as "Cudjoe."

That encounter, so unexpected, so suddenly executed, proved to be one of those curious and costly incidents which has so often altered the whole course of the current of history as exemplified in the long and bitter Maroon war in Jamaica.

For that night when Cudjoe tottered into his hut, weary in body and broken in spirit, he perceived the Maroon struggle as a direct challenge to him. While before this ill-fated day he was merely a rebel, fighting to preserve his freedom in a defensive combat against the English invaders, he was suddenly become vindictive and dangerously murderous.

During the weeks and months following, Cudjoe rarely slept. The firebrand of hatred kindled in his breast from the circumstance of his birth and fueled during the subsequent years, now glowed

with its greatest intensity. The dark waters of rebellion long pent up in his heart became a sizzling stream of lava, driving him on to madness. Leading a small band of Maroon sharpshooters thru the mountains, he trekked down the contemptuous whites, made rude amulets of their teeth, and dangled loosely from his waist a belt of their shriveled ears to give him added power. In clearing of underbrush passage he brandished his cutlass savagely and saw himself mowing down his execrable enemies, the hateful whites. The damned buckras must die. Every one killed gave new vigor to the ebbing source of liberty; every drop of white blood shed furnished additional strength to the threatened fountain of freedom. In this school of personal hot experience, Cudjoe developed potency, so that after becoming absolute leader of the Maroon forces, he had already acquired that resourcefulness which characterized him as the most dangerous man in Jamaica.

II

These intrepid Negroes who fought so defiantly with Cudjoe in defense of their freedom in the mountains of Jamaica were descendants of Koromantis slaves brought into the West Indies by the early Spanish slavers. Their African forebears were reputed to possess great native intelligence and a hardy, sturdy constitution. But they disliked labor, resented bondage and were ferocious and warlike, having constantly waged conquests over the other tribes of the Lower Congo. These things were known to the Spaniards, but they minimized their importance in the belief that once the Negroes reached the Indies these unfavorable characteristic traits could easily be converted into valuable assets. So they slapped their fat bellies, bragged about their sturdy "Gold Coast Niggers," and envisioned

the day when, through hard labor these Koromantis slaves would yet be docilized into invaluable plantation labor-

ers. However, hardly had the slaves arrived at their destination when they began to show unmistakable signs that they had no intention of submitting willingly to the hazards of plantation labor. Moreover these slaves, extremely sensitive and resentful, were always apprehensive of their final destiny, being not unmindful of the cruel fate that had befallen the unfortunate Indian aborigines after the advent of the Spaniards.

The planters, skeptical at first, soon became convinced that something was transpiring under the skin of these black men, albeit something they were powerless to interpret. Signs and signals from the Koromantis leaped across to distant plantations and afforded little consolation to the Spaniards. At night conches blared ominous notes through the hills.

Within a short time after their arrival in Jamaica the slaves became acclimated, and with their remarkable native intelligence readily acquired words and meanings from their masters, while they cautiously planned to revolt.

In due time their African gods favored them in the form of English and French freebooters who came pillaging the Spanish settlements, thereby providing the Koromantis with a chance to desert their masters and betake themselves to the hinterland.

Once reaching these wild regions they found life far more to their liking, and roamed unperturbed in the mountains, living upon the abundance of wild game and fruit, and making occasional desultory excursions to plunder isolated plantations. Their independent existence must have commenced at an

early date, for when Drake coasted the island in 1578, he reported having seen small bands of wild men which he named "Cimmeroons," a term denoting wild, hence the designation "Maroons."

The English planters, failing to profit from the past experience of the Spaniards, also showed a decided preference for the Koromantis, and began to import them into the island, trusting that their dealings with these Negroes would be more fortunate; but they too had no better luck, for neither could their slaves resist the temptation of the conches that blared their significant notes through the mountains at night, inviting them to freedom.

* * * * *

After their flight to freedom the Maroons at first limited their activities mostly to the hills and descended only at intervals to replenish their stores from isolated estates. But preferring plunder to labor they began to extend their escapades to distant plantations and even to nearby villages.

For close to a century they roamed without concentrated leadership. But with the determination of the government to stamp out these marauders, who had become bolder and more daring in their periodic depredations, the Negroes were forced, for their own preservation, to unite under Juan de Bolas, one of their own men.

Bolas was a man of imposing bearing and like Cudjoe his successor, was schooled in the art of bush fighting tactics. In appearance he was tall, graceful, and possessed of a kingly dignity that distinguished him outwardly as a commanding figure; but Bolas was no fighter. Besides, he was irritable, excitable, hot-headed and, alas, a man prone to celebrate his victory before the battle was won.

The occasion which wrote FINIS for Bolas came when Col. D. Oyle, with a

large detachment of the Ninth Dragoon, trapped him and his men in a secret rendezvous as they were confidently reposing in the protection of Nanny, their African goddess. Before they finally escaped, some twenty of his men had fallen. That took the mettle out of Bolas, and soon he, with several of his men, surrendered to the government. (Bolas was later used by the government to command a band of Indians and Negroes, called "Blackshots," against the Maroons; but he, with several of his men, was outskirmished by Cudjoe and cut to pieces).

III

The unexpected surrendering of Juan de Bolas made possible the immediate elevation of Cudjoe to full power over the Maroon forces, and established the commencement of the bitterest part of the Maroon Wars. The event of his "coronation" was as full of pathos as it was dramatic. The Maroons were now being constantly pushed farther and farther back into the wilderness among the crags and wild cockpits, with decreasing prospects of obtaining sufficient food. News had also leaked thru the jungle that the bloodhound, a ferocious beast, used in Cuba for hunting down runaway slaves, would be introduced into Jamaica and let loose among them; too, they had recently suffered a set-back by the defeat inflicted by Col. D. Oyle and the surrendering of Juan de Bolas; and now that it was the beginning of a new year, fresh troops had arrived to further harry them in their mountain fastness. All this was gall and wormwood to Cudjoe. It was very bitter. Yet this very feeling of bitterness and insecurity gave him a sense of his power. And with this power, well, he would show the buckras.

Therefore the feast that night was not a feast at all. Rather it was a reconnoitering of the moral and physical

forces of his men; to urge and inspire them lest they too, by the looming of the dark clouds, should lose their courage like Juan de Bolas.

So when they assembled that night in the dark recesses of those impregnable hills, the fires burned bigger and brighter. Around them, stretching into deep shadows cast by friendly trees and a waning moon, stood silent, grim figures, all of them born fighting in the tropical jungle. In their midst stood a little humped back Negro, stocky and short of stature, but as formidable as a sphinx. He was trying to make a speech.

But Cudjoe was no orator like Juan de Bolas, and his words were marked by a sharp, shrill rattle, while he gestured violently with his hands. On this night however, that did not matter, for there was something unusual about him, a certain quaint power, as he rattled off in pidgin English, his words falling one by one, drops of undistilled venom. He began by soundly abusing Juan de Bolas, and methodically recounted the fortunes of their forebears, their own tragic struggle, and the unlucky consequences that awaited them should they lose courage and fall into the hands of their rabid enemies.

It was long past midnight when those weary bodies prostrated themselves beneath their leaky roofs. But they did not sleep, for before long, dawn drove the stillness from the morning sky, and the Koromantis crawled from their humble huts with the words of Cudjoe still ringing in their ears, and the events of the past rushing like a whirlwind through their brains.

IV

With Cudjoe now in command of the rebels the Maroon struggle became a grave problem to the government. Bringing into action his inherited Koromantis cunningness and the agility

which he had acquired in those friendly mountains through years of constant fighting, Cudjoe determined to throw the entire island into consternation and murder all of its white inhabitants. He planned and carried out devastating raids on plantations and villages where the Maroons were least expected, while the soldiers were vainly hunting them in the mountains. In these raids no one escaped. Men, women, children, and those slaves who refused to join their ranks, alike became victims of their bloodthirstiness. Many planters abandoned the island in disgust, and with their slaves, moved over to the American colonies.

The fighting tactics of the Maroons made impossible any open combat with their enemies; they fought always from behind trees, rocks and from underbrush. Furthermore they knew every inch of those mountains, every defile, crag, precipice, and cockpit. They discovered the movements of their enemies, and then stealthily led them on until they were completely trapped in narrow defiles, where they were instantly shot down. And in the next moment the Maroons had completely vanished.

Year after year soldiers rambled wearily through those mountains; whole troops were completely swallowed up, and throughout the Middlesex mountains were bleached bones and skulls of Englishmen, Scotchmen, Indians and Irishmen, unmistakable evidence that the Negroes were undefeatable in their mountain stronghold.

These sights were excessively demoralizing to the soldiers as they tramped in rain, one day, drenched to the skin, and the next day panted from the heat under the blaze of a merciless tropical sun, with the conches blaring from nowhere, threatening, defying, daring, always ominous. At night there was no sleep; the pestiferous swarms

of mosquitoes buzzed menacingly, crickets chirped, and roosting birds flapped their wings annoyingly beneath branches, filling the jungle with strange, mysterious noises; and the next morning the soldiers, spent from the hazards of the night, despairingly shouldered their muskets and began trekking anew for their invisible foe.

This guerrilla warfare continued for decades with the same results—the Maroons were invincible, their marksmanship supreme, and their fighting tactics made them invulnerable. Cudjoe was avenged.

The government, in its perplexity, proclaimed pardon, freedom, and 20 acres of land to every Maroon who would lay down arms and become a peaceful settler. But not one accepted the offer. When news reached Cudjoe that the Legislative Council offered one hundred pounds for his head, he was not even mildly interested. Between 1700 and 1737 the government had spent 240,000 pounds for the suppression of the Maroons, and forty statutes were enacted by the Legislative Council, but without results.

Moreover the whole island had become tired of this useless struggle, and had begun to talk of peace, even if Britain's prestige in Jamaica should suffer a blow at the hands of a few hundred runaway slaves. Too, it was impossible for either side to determine the strength of the other while the government always suffered the reverses.

The Legislative Council finally voted to hold out the olive branch to Captain Cudjoe, not knowing that the Maroons themselves had almost reached the end of their rope. On March 1st, 1738 the "Articles of Pacification" were drawn up by the government representatives, Captain Saddler, Col. Guthrie and Dr. Russell, who met Cudjoe with two of his men in the hills. The treaty recog-

nized the Maroons as a free and independent people, free to govern themselves without any interference or intervention from the government. A part of the territory, consisting of fifteen hundred acres of land, on which they had carried on their warfare, they were allowed to occupy, free of taxes. But in compensation they should, after that date, return all runaway slaves to their masters, and ally themselves with the whites during any crisis on the Island.

In the years following the termination of the conflict the Maroons became peaceful settlers, and erected houses and huts on their mountain reservation, where they lived unmolested, but always closely watched by the whites. Their hero Cudjoe, lived in this mountain village with all the pomp and magnificence of a tribal king, worshipped as a hero, venerated as a god. He gloried in the realization that he had triumphantly vindicated the cause of his fathers, and with it he grew passive, contented to be adored.

Cudjoe had no vague vision of building up an empire, nor of even erecting impregnable fortifications to ensure his settlement against further assaillment by the English. He trusted wholly in the integrity of the whites, believing that they would never go back on a treaty signed in their own blood. So he

was satisfied to remain tranquil, seeing his clan develop into a simple agricultural people, free to practise their old tribal rites and remain uncontaminated by the outside world.

Once, fired with the zest of youth, his impassioned love for freedom and his inborn hatred of the whites, he had conceived the daring idea of driving out the white settlers, liberating the slaves, and taking possession of the Island.

This reckless ambition was never achieved; but the ultimate aim—freedom of the maroons—became an accomplished fact. Its achievement gave him a feeling of profound satisfaction, a sense of exalted pride. If his rancour for the buckras had somewhat subsided with the Pacification Treaty, his contempt for the slaves had grown in proportion. With this thought he became slightly philosophical, antedating Friedrich Nietzsche by a hundred and fifty years in the theory that a slave becomes noble only when he revolts. For had not the Koromantis fought for their independence while the other Negroes were still chafing under the yoke of bondage?

Rightly or wrongly the Maroons believed Cudjoe and began to evolve social barriers against all other Negroes which their proud descendants have continued to uphold.



Miracles

FRANK G. YERBY

The day of miracles is done, you say—
Is gone—as splendid things must always go;
I cry—You're wrong, my friend, for yesterday
A dogwood blossomed into fragrant snow

Some birds strained wide their golden muscled throats,
And magic scenes of silent moon-drenched night
Were caught in webs of haunting silver notes,
And came cascading down in pools of light. . . .

No miracles? Though life still springs from husks
Long dry and dead? Oh words without reflection!
For swift parades of endless golden dusks
Are matched by each new morning's resurrection. .



Brevity

FRANK G. YERBY

Death is a dark bird flying
Across the white-faced moon;
Life is a pale gull crying:
"The seas . . . reach up . . . so soon!"



Carl Van Vechten Comments

Occasionally, some one is heard to croak hoarsely that the Negro "Renaissance" that was launched so bravely in 1926-27 has not continued its voyage on the seas of art as triumphantly as might have been wished. Personally I feel no sympathy with these complaints, no disappointment in the results. On the contrary, I believe the Negro of today to be on a much more solid basis as an artist and as a social individual than he was then. Certainly James Weldon Johnson's *Along This Way* is an autobiography to rank with the very best books in that department and presently will appear two other volumes, each of which, fine in its particular way, should do a great deal to lift the excellent average of Negro fiction to a higher level: Langston Hughes's *The Ways of White Folks* (Knopf) and Zora Neale Hurston's *Jonah's Gourd Vine* (Lippincott's).

Miss Ethel Waters, who is very probably the greatest living singer of popular ballads, has paved the way for future Negro stars (if they are good enough) to climb into white revues, while the production of *Four Saints in Three Acts*, the Gertrude Stein-Virgil Thomson opera, utilizes Negroes in a new field, as singing actors in alien Spanish roles. Miss Caterina Jarboro, too, has exhibited her talent in the congenial character of Aida.

These are all symbols of better days. If standards are higher, the talent of genius expressed is greater too. In fact, nowadays, there is no inclination on the part of the great public to say, "Pretty good for a Negro." If it cannot say, "Extraordinary from any point of view," it is not likely to show much interest.



Dear Reader

We continue to feel that the interesting excerpts from the letters of our contributors and friends (Our enemies don't write us. We wish they would) fill the editor's page much better than any piece we might write ourselves.

Only one word. We were disappointed in the contributions that came in from the new voices. There was little that we wanted to print. Bad writing is unbelievably bad. We felt somewhat crazily that the authors must be spoofing and that they didn't really mean us to take their stuff for prose and poetry.

That largely explains why we are become a quarterly. We were just not ready to go to press at the end of a month. And we had to fall back on the tried and true voices. And we are that embarrassed.

Here is a fine excerpt from the letter of Arna Bontemps which might well be, "I told you so." He writes, "I am not convinced about the 'younger writers.' We're not washed up, not by a jugful. It is a pretty pose, this attitude about, 'old before our time.' I will not have it. We left Egypt in the late twenties and presently crossed the Red Sea. Naturally the wandering in the wilderness followed. The promised land is ahead. Why, Langston (Hughes) has just recently been spying it out for us, and the grapes are promising. Furthermore we are well able to go over and possess it. Now if the 'younger writers' can take our crowns, here is their chance and here is our challenge. But they will have to take them. We have just achieved our growth. Nobody knows our strength."

We are afraid we are always going to quote Bontemps, whose letters should be preserved. His prose is a joy forever.

A tribute from Whit Burnett, editor of 'Story.' 'Challenge is very fine. . . . Typographically, the inking of the pages seems to be uneven; otherwise nothing but praise.'

We are deeply appreciative of the following from Hillery C. Thorne, director of the English department of West Virginia State College. 'It may interest you to know that the contents of the first issue touched something which has been in my heart and soul for many years. As a result West Virginia State College produced a student and faculty programme aiming at the encouragement of

the creative instinct—The Yellow Jacket, the students' newspaper of this college, plans to conduct a poetry contest. The products of this contest may be utilized by you if you so desire.'

And we do indeed and are clearing a space on our desk.

In Langston Hughes' round handwriting, "You've done a grand job. I hope you'll have lots of readers. And it's swell to see Helene (Johnson) in print again. Get something from Gwendolyn Bennett, Zora (Hurstons), Wallie (Thurman), a cover from Doug (Aaron Douglas). All the oldtimers aren't dead. If they're dozing, you ought to wake 'em up."

With Carl Van Vechten's piece came "567 white penguin feathers and a blue owl!"

The Editor.



Voices

BLANCHE COLTON WILLIAMS, the nationally known educator and critic, has watched the progress of Negro writers since 1925 with considerable interest and understanding.

MILDRED JONES is a young New York art student.

ALFRED H. MENDES is a native of Port of Spain, Trinidad, B. W. I. He is a protege of Aldous Huxley, and is now in America with a fine sheaf of stories.

ZORA NEALE HURSTON is probably foremost among the Negro women writers. She is coming back with a bang and two highly praised novels.

ARNA BONTEMPS, we hope, will like his article. He didn't like his story.

MARY CHRISTOPHER too, appears again, and again with a Negro setting. We are glad she is a regular contributor.

WALTER EVERETT HAWKINS has written for various Negro newspapers. We are printing his article for the benefit of those who agree with him and want to see their views expressed.

COUNTEE CULLEN gives us another graceful poem.

CLAUDE McKAY returns to America after two years with much fine prose. The ink is barely dry on this grand poem.

CARL VAN VECHTEN made the nation aware of the Negro renaissance. There are some who say he has a lot to atone for.

FRANK G. YERBY is a new name to us. But we delayed our issue in order to include him. For we feel his talent is such that it should be encouraged.

LOUIS G. SUTHERLAND, whose article is one of the most interesting that has come to our desk, was born somewhere in Central America. He has been in the United States since boyhood, with only occasional excursions back to his birthplace. He has a wealth of interesting material in preparation.

CHALLENGE Announces Its Literary Contest

Open To All Writers

Send In Your Manuscripts Now

Contest Closes Midnight, December 31, 1934

Poems, Short Stories, And Essays Desired

Manuscripts Should Not Exceed 3,500 Words

Cash Prizes And Honorable Mentions

Established Critics Will Judge The Entries

Final Details in December Challenge

Manuscripts Must Be Typed, Double Spaced, And Return Postage Enclosed If Return Of Manuscript Is Desired. Address Your Entries To CONTEST EDITOR, 233 W. 138th St., New York City.

